



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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FESIA A. DAVENPORT
Chief Executive Officer

July 22, 2022

To: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
HILDA L. SOLIS
First District

HOLLY J. MITCHELL
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

JANICE HAHN
Fourth District

KATHRYN BARGER
Fifth District

REPORT BACK ON ADDRESSING THE NEED TO CREATE CLIMATE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES (ITEM NO. 21, AGENDA OF MARCH 1, 2022)

On March 1, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion (Motion) directing the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in consultation with the Chief Sustainability Office (CSO), the Departments of Public Works (DPW), Public Health (DPH), and other key departments to report to the Board within 45 days on the steps necessary to incubate, for up to 15 months, a Climate Resilience Initiative (CRI) within the CEO to implement a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate resilience, including hiring a consultant with expertise in this arena and identifying staffing support and resources as necessary.

Background and Initial Action Steps

Under the Board's leadership, the County has taken several actions to address and reduce impacts related to climate change (See Attachment). This includes the issuance of a comprehensive, Countywide Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) by the CSO in late 2021, that modeled future climate impacts at the census tract scale and showed that climate change will result in more frequent, longer, and more severe heat storms, wildfires, and droughts in Los Angeles County. The CVA findings have received notable media attention and have been used to inform various public processes, such as infrastructure planning at the County and outside of the County.

The Motion also indicated that the State and federal government are dedicating financial resources and attention to climate resilience, recognizing that our communities are already facing dangers from climate change and that these dangers will increase in the future. The Governor's proposed budget dedicated over \$1 billion to drought resilience, heat response, clean energy resilience, and the development of regional Climate and Health Resilience Plans. There are also significant federal funds being allocated to these purposes and the philanthropic community is also supporting climate resilience planning, policies, and programs.

Just as the CSO has established a strategic vision for sustainability, and coordinates and oversees County departments in the implementation of this vision, the response to this Motion seeks to establish a CRI that ensures that the County: 1) develops a comprehensive climate resilience vision and strategy to guide the County's response to climate hazards; 2) is able to proactively access State, federal, and philanthropic resources; and 3) takes a collaborative, cross-departmental and cross-sectoral effort to ensure a consistent and coordinated whole-of-government approach to these issues.

In terms of initial steps, the CEO has conducted a preliminary review including coordinating the following actions: meeting with and soliciting feedback from key departments mentioned in the directive including the CSO, DPW, DPH, and Regional Planning; researching models and best practices of climate resilience offices and initiatives in other local government jurisdictions; and assessed potential options for hiring a consultant with subject-matter expertise in climate resiliency efforts to establish and implement a CRI within the County.

Models for Climate Resilience Offices in Other Jurisdictions

In response to the Motion, the CSO reviewed findings from an independent evaluation of the 100 Resilient Cities program, which was established by the Rockefeller Foundation in 2013 to help cities develop resilience programs within their jurisdictions (See Attachment). This report showed evaluated lessons learned and strategies of how the participating cities provided cross-departmental coordination in the development and implementation of resilience plans.

Climate Resilience Initiative Scope and Landscape Analysis

The new CRI will have to address many key programs related to social and community resilience including, but not limited to, creating Community Resilience Hubs; developing new hazard warning systems to better alert the public to potential dangers (such as severe heat); adopting new zoning and building codes and regulations to reduce climate impacts; developing policies to protect workers and others from the dangers of climate hazards such as heat exposure; and creating financing mechanisms to manage growing County response costs. Additionally, improving the County's physical infrastructure is also critical as schools, hospitals, energy and water systems, transportation, and telecommunications facilities are all vital to managing the impact of climate hazards on our communities. Each of these key programs would also necessitate engagement with other County departments, stakeholders, and communities, especially the most vulnerable ones identified in the CVA.

Based on preliminary consultation with other key County departments, a whole-of-government approach to addressing climate resilience requires a landscape analysis and coordinated structure to incorporate all necessary elements including alignment with other Board Motions. The proposed CRI is referenced in directives for at least three subsequent Board Motions including: "Ensuring the Equitable Decarbonization of Buildings (March 15, 2022)"; "Evolving and Advancing the Board Directed Priority: Environmental Justice and Climate Health (April 5, 2022)"; and "Equitable and Sustainable Outcomes in

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Federal and State Infrastructure Funding (April 5, 2022).” As result, the CSO is conducting a comprehensive landscape analysis of countywide and departmental climate resiliency initiatives and efforts, both currently in place and planned for implementation in the future.

Next Steps

After much research and analysis, including exploring hiring a consultant to complete an assessment and other tasks necessary to establish the County’s CRI, and based upon the complexities of this initiative, the CEO, working in collaboration with the CSO, recommends that the funding that would have been used for a consultant be allocated to the CSO and combined with potential grant funds from the State and the Office’s limited funding for the purposes of hiring permanent staff to implement the climate resiliency initiative. The CEO will work with CSO to provide a recommendation in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Supplemental Budget phase.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact me or Julia F. Orozco, Acting Branch Manager, Policy Implementation and Alignment, at (213) 974-1152 or jorozco@ceo.lacounty.gov.

FAD:JMN:JFO
EDT:JT:PN:kdm

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Public Health
Public Works

CLIMATE RESILIENCY INITIATIVE – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Key Recent Los Angeles County Climate Resilience Efforts

- 2016: The Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the creation of a Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) to coordinate sustainability efforts throughout the Los Angeles region.
- 2019: The Board adopted the OurCounty Sustainability Plan which presented a bold, inclusive, and regional sustainability vision for the present and future generations of the Los Angeles region.
- 2021: The County CSO issued a comprehensive, Countywide Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) that modeled future climate impacts at the census tract scale and showed that climate change will result in more frequent, longer, and more severe heat storms, wildfires, and droughts in Los Angeles County (County).
 - The CVA identified key physical infrastructure systems that are vulnerable to these changes and evaluated the cascading impacts that showed how failures in one part of the system would impact other parts of the system.
 - Importantly, the CVA also identified 29 distinct social characteristics within each census tract in the County to identify populations that were both exposed to and highly sensitive to these climate hazards; such social characteristics include older adults, people without access to mobility, people whose primary language was not English, people with underlying health conditions, and people from communities of color.
 - The CVA's social vulnerability, physical vulnerability, and cascading impacts analyses provide the County with highly detailed and geographically-specific information for developing a coordinated, cross-sectoral, whole-of-government approach for addressing these vulnerabilities, in alignment with the existing OurCounty Sustainability Plan.

Models for Climate Resilience Offices in Other Jurisdictions

100 Resilient Cities (Source: <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/100-resilient-cities/>)

In 2013, The Rockefeller Foundation pioneered [100 Resilient Cities](https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/100-resilient-cities/) (100 RC) to help more cities build resilience to the physical, social, and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st Century. Cities in the 100RC network have been provided with the resources necessary to develop a roadmap to resilience along four main pathways:

- Financial and logistical guidance for establishing an innovative new position in city government, a Chief Resilience Officer, who will lead the city's resilience efforts (<https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/blog/what-a-chief-resilience-officer-does/>) ;

- Expert support for the development of a robust Resilience Strategy;
- Access to solutions, service providers, and partners from the private, public and non-governmental organization sectors who can help them develop and implement their Resilience Strategies; and
- Membership of a global network of member cities who can learn from and help each other.

Additional information can be found in the report “Resilient Cities, Resilient Lives: Learning from the 100RC Network”

(https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/downloadable_resources/UR/Resilient-Cities-Resilient-Lives-Learning-from-the-100RC-Network.pdf)

Examples of Chief Resilience Initiatives

The 100 Resilient Cities program report provided examples and an assessment of how jurisdictions managed cross-departmental coordination in the development and implementation of resilience plans. These efforts were sometimes conducted through mayor’s or executive/administrative offices, offices of emergency management, or in operating departments.

Some examples of chief resiliency programs in larger jurisdictions in the United States include:

- The City of Los Angeles has both a Chief Sustainability Office and a separate Chief Resilience Office and both are located within the Office of the Mayor; they issued a comprehensive resilience plan in 2018.
- The City of San Francisco established a Department of Environment and a separate Office of Resilience and Capital Planning within its City Administrator’s Office.
- The City of Boston established a Department of the Environment and a separate Department of Racial Equity and Resilience; they have built resilience into the city budget and separately established a \$5 million resilience fund to support these efforts.
- Miami-Dade County has a Chief Resilience Officer that oversees their Office of Resilience which has a Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget of \$4.3 million. Separately, they have established and funded a Chief Heat Officer position.
- The City of Houston has established a Chief Resilience and Sustainability Office within its Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department.
- The City of New York Climate Policy and Programs unit within the Mayor’s Offices includes three separate offices for resilience planning: 1) Sustainability; 2) Climate and Environmental Justice (that oversees its resilience efforts); and 3) Environmental Coordination.